

Press Release

Neville Baker Māori Focus Forum

~~Mr~~ Neville Baker, a member of the Forum, responded to the IPCA report on allegations of misconduct made by three unnamed employees of Justice Corrections and Police released today.

He said that members of the Forum welcomed the recognition given to DC Haumaha and acknowledged that ultimately the complaints have not been upheld.

They reject the criticisms of the Deputy Commissioner and say that the findings are inconsistent with the conclusions reached by Ms Scholtens QC in her report published in October.

They further note that the report appears to them to lack any balance given that the first two allegations were found to be untrue, or at best unreasonable, and that the report expressly ignores the conduct of the complainants themselves.

They note that one of the findings of inappropriate behaviour by DC Haumaha is of actions his lawyers expressly advised him to undertake. The lawyers themselves have reported to the Forum that they stand by the advice they gave to DC Haumaha and respectfully disagree with the finding that if such actions were wrong, they would be at least as much at fault as DC Haumaha.

Of the other two matters for which he is criticised, they say that the report shows that DC Haumaha himself raised the matter with the complainant's employer immediately after the incident in 2016. At that time, he received a clear acknowledgment that she was the one at fault and a statement was made by her supervisor that she would be removed if she repeated her behaviour.

They are also very concerned to learn that the Authority refused to disclose to DC Haumaha copies of the complaints or copies of any statements made to them. The fact that hearings were in secret and heard in the absence of DC Haumaha and his representatives was unjust, as was the fact that the names of the witnesses were also withheld.

The Forum members sought to speak to the Authority but were denied the opportunity to present evidence. From this they conclude that the Authority determined not to receive relevant evidence from people with first-hand knowledge of DC Haumaha's work practices and even worse refused to receive the cultural perspective the Forum wished to offer.

For these reasons, the Forum rejects the IPCA's criticism of DC Haumaha entirely.

The Māori Focus Forum is a body of senior Māori elders established in 2006. Its current members include Sir Toby Curtis, Dame Naida Glavish, Kara Puketapu, Dame Iritana Tawhiwhirangi, Selwyn Parata, Arihia Stirling, Chrisie Hape, Sir Mark Solomon, Neville Baker, Bishop Kito Pikaahu, Harry Mikaere and Paora Stanley.